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Housekeepers' Chats

Monday, June 22, 1931

(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

Subject: "A Meal to Suit the Season." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

--ooOoo--

When the supper bell rang, Betty Jane, who was sitting in the hammock, engrossed in a book, didn't stir.

"Better close your book, Betty Jane, or you may miss this beautiful supper your Aunt Sammy has put on the table."

Betty Jane came in slowly, looking bored at the thought of such a commonplace event as food, and announced that she would far rather read about princes and castles than eat.

"Tut, tut," said Uncle Ebenezer. "Young ladies who need good food to grow shouldn't allow themselves to become too romantic at mealtime. Look at this excellent new green cabbage. Doesn't that tempt your appetite?"

"Cabbage!" exclaimed Betty Jane disdainfully.

"Did you ever stop to think," suggested Uncle Ebenezer, "That it is food like cabbage that makes small girls grow up into princesses. Just ask your aunt across the table."

"I don't believe there are any real princesses any more like those in books."

"Don't be too sure," warned Uncle Ebenezer. "I know of a Cinderella in the vegetable family."

Betty Jane laughed.

"Cabbage is a real Cinderella. Don't laugh. I'll tell you a story to prove it.

"Once upon a time cabbage was a very humble vegetable. People used it because it was cheap and easy to get. Corned beef and cabbage was the traditional poor man's dish. Elegant folks turned up their noses at the very smell of cabbage cooking, and regarded it as a food for poor boarding houses. And no wonder. When it appeared on the table, it was usually a brownish, mass

with a strong odor and a strong, unappetizing flavor. No one really appreciated it. And most people didn't know how to cook it so that it was inviting in looks as well as taste.

"Well, now, who do you suppose was the fairy godmother of cabbage? The nutrition experts. All of a sudden they discovered just how valuable cabbage was to the human race. They learned that this lowly vegetable contained vitamins A,B, and C, especially C. Now vitamin C, as every wise child today knows, is a substance needed for growth and good development and general well being. Nobody can be strong, healthy and happy who doesn't get his vitamin C. And these scientists discovered some other facts. They found out that cabbage was also rich in calcium and that it contained some sulphur. They began to encourage people to eat cabbage raw in slaw or salad so that they would get all these useful elements it contained. The next step was to find out the proper way to cook cabbage. Too many of those vitamins and minerals were being lost in the cooking process. The old method was to boil cabbage in water for hours. That long cooking did a lot of harm. It destroyed the vitamin C. It changed the natural white or green color to a dingy, brown shade. It spoiled the nice, crisp, fresh texture making it a water mass. And a strong flavor and odor was developed from the sulphur compounds.

"'This will never do,' said those nutrition people. So they tried short, rapid cooking. Instead of letting the cabbage boil for hours and hours, they cooked it for a very short time---five to fifteen minutes, depending on how small it was cut. Isn't that right, Aunt Sammy? Now modern housekeepers can serve delicious cabbage, food fit for princes and kings. Look at that dish of green, tender cabbage, done just to a turn, as cooks used to say. I know how it was prepared. It was dropped in an open kettle of boiling salted water and cooked until just tender, not a minute longer. I haven't lived in the house with Aunt Sammy all this time without learning a thing or two about the approved method of cooking cabbage."

I told Uncle Ebenezer that that was the best <u>true</u> fairy tale I had heard in a long time. It's a great thing to have an uncle with an imagination around the house. And I noticed that Betty Jane ate all her cabbage then and there and asked for a second helping.

New, tender, green cabbage is one of the most delicious of the early summer vegetables. Too often we think of it only as a winter vegetable, because of the hard, white, mature heads that we store in our cellars in the fall. It is really a year-round vegetable. When the new crop comes in, it should be featured in our early summer meals, not only because of its food value but also because it is <u>delicious</u> and very inexpensive. And it can be served in a great variety of ways -- boiled, creamed, scalloped, baked and other ways too numerous to mention now.

All this reminds me that my subject today is a meal to suit the season. June is the month when the thrifty housekeeper should take advantage of the flavor, the vitamins and the minerals available at greatly reduced rates. Gardens and markets are now ready to supply fresh fruits and vegetables. If she plans her meals to center around the new products when they are abundant and inexpensive, she can provide tempting, nourishing summer meals at low cost. To make meals interesting and prevent monotony, the seasonal foods

can be served frequently but in different ways.

Our meal today is planned with this in mind. A June dinner with plenty of new fruits and vegetables and plenty of variety in color and flavor.

Veal Birds for the main dish. Then, New Cabbage with Cheese Sauce. Yes, indeed, I certainly am going to give you that recipe. Next, Buttered New Beets. Nothing better, is there, unless it is the greens made from their tender new tops. Cucumber and Lettuce Salad. And, for dessert, Fresh Cherry Tart. Please notice the contrast in color and in flavor.

New cabbage served with cheese sauce contains just 6 ingredients.

1 medium-sized head of cabbage
4 tablespoons of flour
4 tablespoons of butter or other fat
2 cups of milk
1/2 teaspoon of salt, and
1 cup grated cheese.

Did you get all those? (Repeat)

Cook the cabbage in boiling salted water until just tender. The length of time, of course, depends upon the size of pieces. If the cabbage is cut into quarters or eighths, it should cook in 15 minutes, or less. Now prepare a sauce of the flour, fat, milk, and salt. Cook it in a double boiler. When the sauce is thickened, add the grated cheese, and stir it until melted. Pour the sauce over the drained cabbage and serve.

Have I time to give you my recipe for cherry tart? It won't take long for it. The directions are:

Again 6 ingredients:

4 cups juicy tart, pitted cherries
2 tablespoons of cornstarch
1 cup of sugar
2 tablespoons of butter
1/8 teaspoon of salt, and
Pastry.

Simmer the cherries for 5 minutes, and drain off the juice. When the juice has cooled, mix the cornstarch with it and cook until thickened. Now add the cherries, sugar, butter, and salt, and mix thoroughly. Pour the hot fruit mixture into individual baked pastry shells. Serve cold, and put whipped cream on top, if desired.

Tomorrow: "Laundering Colored Clothes."